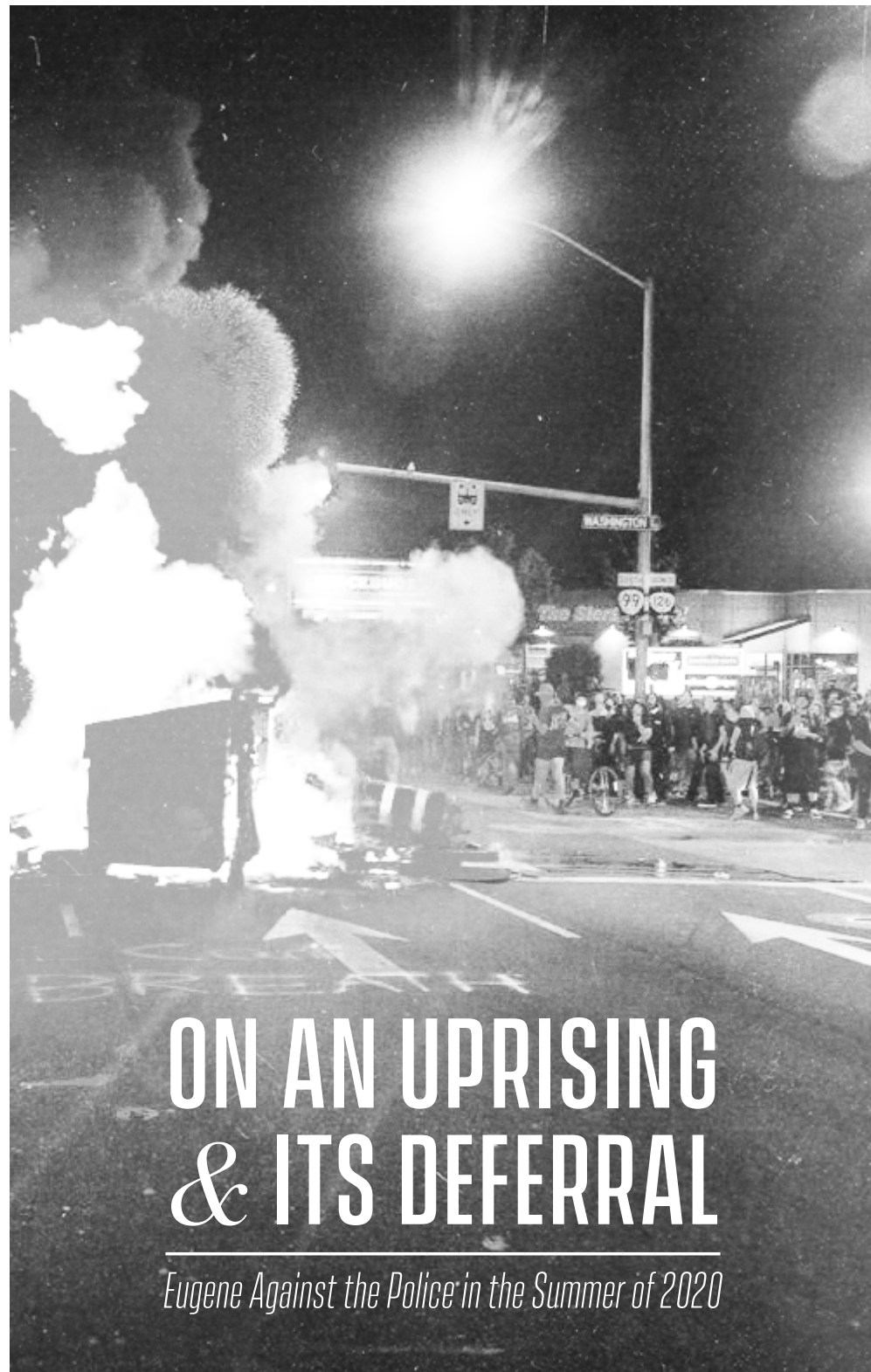




Counterflow Distro

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ON AN UPRISING & ITS DEFERRAL

Eugene Against the Police in the Summer of 2020

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5. See Salish Sea Black Autonomists' *Reparations As A Verb* for a more in-depth discussion of the recuperation of the language of Black Liberation.
6. A couple noise demonstrations in support of the hunger strikers were among the most rowdy of the summer besides the outright riots. One resulted in several police vehicles being damaged. The hunger strike and the activity around it was a great example of collaboration between those incarcerated and those on the outside, and is well worth taking pointers from. More info on the hunger strike can be found at: bit.ly/3QDRLaF
7. Last year's vandalism of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial [*"Vandals strike Eugene's Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial"* on KOIN 6 News] and the more recent communique claiming responsibility for attacks on construction vehicles in solidarity with Forest Defenders in Atlanta [posted 5/19/2022 on scenes.noblogs.org] are two documented examples — these activities are not always publicized.
8. Writing about the 2008 Greek Insurrection, AG Schwarz says: "[...] by carrying out attacks — primarily smashings and molotov attacks against banks and police stations, which constitute the most obvious symbols of capitalist exploitation and State violence for Greek society — insurrectionary anarchists created signals of disorder that acted as subversive seeds. Even though most people did not agree with these attacks at the time, they lodged in their consciousness, and at a moment of social rupture, people adopted these forms as their own tools, to express their rage when all the traditionally valid forms of political activity were inadequate." As we mentioned earlier, the frequency of attacks like these — though still modest in number — have increased locally since 2020. It is clear that some in Lane County are seizing the initiative, and in this context anarchists have an opportunity to contribute in a conscious, intentional way to the antagonistic grammar that might compose future rebellions.

Endnotes



1. The difference in approach between the more PR-conscious Eugene Police Department and the more nakedly brutal Springfield Police Department seems similar in some ways to the comparisons drawn between the Tucson Police Department and the Phoenix Police Department in the anonymously-authored *Blood on the Sand: The Department of Justice Investigates the Phoenix PD*.
2. Historical info on the Kalapuya can be found at: libraryguides.lanecc.edu/kalapuya
3. A reportback on M29 from a “POC participant” was submitted to the website of local anarchist organization Neighborhood Anarchist Collective and made modest rounds on social media.
4. The US Army’s *Field Manual 3-24* suggests that, in order to ward off insurgency, authorities should work “[...] with factions from a population to get them to see the benefit of participating in peaceful means to address their core grievances. Getting youths to understand the legal means they have to address root causes of conflict is a critical tool for reducing violence. If commanders and staffs believe that insurgencies may occur over extended periods, then some efforts must be made to engage this next generation of leaders who can establish a lasting peace.” We can easily read between the lines to interpret that the “violence” they would like to reduce is insurrectionary activity that would threaten their control, and that Eugene Black Unity and every other group of their ilk are exactly the “next generation of leaders” the forces of order were looking for. US Army, *Field Manual 3-24*, no. 10-10

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To start from the beginning would take a very, very long time. So, I'll start from the middle.

From the middle of a march that felt very different than any other I'd ever attended in Eugene.

From the middle of a crowd unafraid to yell at the cops, to chant angrily, and also unafraid to take pleasure in all the fun things about being rowdy together: shooting off fireworks, dragging signs into the street for makeshift barricades to slow police, and enjoying the open expression of anger itself.

From the middle of the on-ramp to the I-5 where police attempted to disperse the crowd with pepper spray, getting the windows of their cars smashed out by skateboarders in response. The cops squealed off in fear, not to engage again for hours.

From the middle of that intersection on Washington we took over uselessly, celebratorily, for several hours. The one we decorated with countless tags and built a bonfire in the middle of, those excessive gestures that can only be expected from forced shut-ins finally brought out to the street to respond to an anti-Black cop lynching.

And from the middle of a sea of outrage and disavowal produced in the wake of the riot by many so-called radicals after something *real* finally happening; these counteractions being fatal to the expansion of the rebellion in Eugene.

In accepting that we are not the prime movers of revolutionary upheaval, we can take a more grounded perspective as to what our activity should look like and what our capacity and ability to intervene in social struggles actually is. This can be a time to make friends; to increase the extension and connection of networks; to hone already existing skills and learn new ones; to study theory, history, the local conditions and insurrections in other places; and to expand and alter our perspectives and discuss these with comrades. We should do things that nourish us and refuse, to the best of our abilities, that which depletes and drains us. Rebellion takes root nowhere if not in our own, first-person way of moving through the world, and a revolution premised on the subsumption of individuals to a collective and the sacrifice of individual desire for some abstraction like “the community,” or even “the revolution,” is doomed to sad conformity and bitter self-hatred. This does not entail a rejection of organization or collectivity, rather the insistence that our forms of organization give back more than we put into them. Let us be done with spinning our wheels building organizations with people we don't like just to prove to ourselves we're “doing something.” Let us be done with trying to grow the quantities of comrades without attending to the quality of our relationships to one another, and to whether or not we're acting as we wish to act. As experiences last summer such as the utterly deflating march to Alton Baker Park, showed us, a vast amassing of bodies is no guarantee of collective power.

Until rupture turns Eugene back into a wetland — *together towards the party of disorder!*

*To help with legal costs for those arrested as a result of the
M29 rebellion, and those who may need help in the future,
Venmo @EugeneBailFund*



The struggle against domination finds its roots in everyday life—it is a tapestry of actions, relations, and resources, a certain combination of motion and rest, slowness and speed. A prime mistake by activists, self-described revolutionary or not, is to place the burden of changing the world solely on their shoulders. That practice leads only to burnout and further despair at *never being enough* as they struggle to fill shoes that were never theirs in the first place. The truth is, it is forces that far exceed activists which cause conflagrations like the M29 Riot, those moments of social upheaval that force rupture in our city. To imagine that it's a small amount of activists who make revolutions happen is to buy into the mythology of the vanguard, regardless of whether or not you think of yourself as a vanguardist. This mythology states that the exploited and abused masses need conscious revolutionaries to lead them, either through education or by direct authority. As anarchists we reject this notion and contend that capital and the State can be abolished only by the self-activity of the exploited themselves. We are not the spark that makes it all explode, and we are not going to create a “new society in the shell of the old” through non-confrontational mutual aid efforts (and trying to do so leads only to exhaustion and burnout). What we can do, however, is keep the fires lit during down periods — to keep alive the insurrectionary spirit of Eugene’s rioters. To spread, not just ideas, but material acts that might have resonance and might spread in that strange and unpredictable way that acts of insubordination do. We mean acts that get lodged in people’s muscle memory and emotional psyche, as weapons to pick up in future moments of crisis.⁸



This was May 29th, the night of the nationwide insurrectionary response to the murder of George Floyd. The night when both the police and the activist managers lost all control, and when those of us present got a taste of what it can feel like to retake our power together.

In Eugene, hundreds gathered at Washington and 7th avenue to revel in the moment, loot nearby stores, set shit on fire, and hold the space for several hours. National context aside, this was an uncharacteristic development in this town: a place with a massive counter-insurgency operation in the form of an active liberal political movement, the reformist activism stemming from NGO’s and the local University, and a police department that hasn’t forgotten the lessons of the Green Scare. What took place was the first riot since the “Golden Days,” when Eugene was known as one of the anarchist “capitals” of the world.

Unfortunately, the intensity of May 29th was quickly pushed back under the surface by a multi-pronged counterattack from the EPD, the progressive political class in Eugene, and activists. Discourse swirled amongst some of Eugene’s so-called radicals who either refused to endorse the riot or outright condemned it. “I have mixed feelings” became the slogan of those who were caught wholly unprepared for revolt but had the sense not to express their discomfort. Meanwhile, the city wasted no time in imposing a curfew to prevent further

unrest. On the night of the 30th a small march of dedicated rebels tried to break the curfew, but it resulted in a swift crackdown by the EPD and several arrests. Within the span of a day, momentum shifted back to the side of order.

The day after — May 31st — a permitted march organized by Black youth in collaboration with the city's political class, the EPD, and the NAACP, directed a crowd of nearly 10,000 into a park to be talked at by congressmen and other politicians. Billed as a rally to unite Eugene against racism, it was really a maneuver by Eugene's political establishment to mobilize their constituency, and direct energies into non-productive channels. Unfortunately, and in part due to the speed of the political operation, anarchists were ill equipped to confront this moment of co-optation.

The huge crowd marched from the Federal Courthouse to nearby Alton Baker Park. Once there, people were subjected to speeches, various moments of silence, and empty gestures such as kneeling. Not feeling the vibe, many began the slow migration out of the park. Due to the uneven pace of exit from the rally, a crowd wasn't able to aggregate in the same size they were before. Still, around 200 protesters managed to link up in front of the jail after a brief confrontation with police, to attempt a breakaway march against the curfew. Though courageous in their actions, an overwhelming police presence, vigilante counter attacks, and unhelpful rumors of Proud Boy incursions, rendered this attempt fruitless. At the end, there were only a few dozen standing against every cop that EPD could muster. In the week that followed, nighttime marches were attempted by various crews but met little success and heavy repression from police and vigilantes. Admittedly, those marches lacked any discernible strategy or conflictual orientation, which partially made them more vulnerable to the problems they encountered.

evaluation of their life's priorities, what they want their lives to be about and who they want in it, amidst a climate of ever-compounding crises and very uncertain future prospects. To live through and witness the unceremonious, quiet death of an insurrection as briefly earthquaking as the George Floyd Rebellion is a hope-shattering experience. Combined with the general spiritual wreckage of our era, the slow-moving disaster that is colonial modernity, it is easy to take this death as yet another reason to escape from life. To try and get excited for that next politician, for a career, for whatever new show is coming out, for little distractions, to try and convince yourself that any of those can banish the void that continues to grow within, around, and between every being. This society will never cease to offer new images of happiness, lulls of peace and small morsels of contentment with which to be bought off. It can be easy to float through life without ever having to truly confront the utter existential poverty of this existence. Especially easy, in fact, to do in a playground for Pacific Northwest hippies and yuppies such as Eugene.

The only way out of this kind of nihilism is through; the only way to banish this emptiness is to complete it. To become powerful, we need to learn how to grieve, how to move towards connection within and through grief. There is a kernel of affirmation there for us to find within all of the pain if we fully let it in and allow it to teach us. To become revolutionary is not to harden into a soldier, but to connect our warlike impulses to everything soft and loving within and between us. The 20th century Workers' Movements came and went; the Black Power, Gay Liberation, and militant Feminist movements of the 60's and 70's likewise were bitterly defeated. We are still fighting an entire civilization built on work, anti-Blackness, (cis)heterosexuality, and patriarchy, but we cannot merely import the strategies of bygone eras. Where we're at, we have little other choice but to fully accept our historical defeat and fashion a means of victory out of its ragged threads. To gather together all of the sparks that have lit up our life, to attach the joy of living to the determination to fight against all that prevents us from actualizing this joy. Every moment of business as usual is an indescribable tragedy, but every moment stolen from societal control is a gift, and those moments are our starting place.

But the quietude of the streets belies the ongoing influence and legacy of the George Floyd Uprising here in Eugene. As “Your Lazy Comrades” asserts in their text *The Great Refusal*, “the movement didn’t simply *leave* the streets, but *translated* itself from the streets into workplaces, homes, schools, prisons, families, social gatherings, in other words, into proletarian everyday life.” (emphasis original). We already saw this process of translation begin in the summer of 2020, as the the Uprising helped to catalyze a hunger strike at the Lane County Jail that lasted a total of 81 days.⁶ The echoes of the Uprising live on in refusal of work as proletarians continue to quit their jobs *en masse*, in the increasing number of student walkouts in response to legislative attacks on transgender life and reproductive autonomy, and in the uptick in traditional labor movement tactics like unionization. Additionally, since the summer of 2020 there has been a subtle but marked increase locally in the frequency of isolated attacks against the symbols and infrastructure of capital and the State.⁷ The intensity has dimmed, but the terrains of struggle have multiplied.

In terms of policy changes, or even what most would consider “material” results, the Uprising changed little in Lane County. But the city still bears scars of the uprising: they never quite got the spray-paint off of the Whole Foods from the July 25th Riot, the Pioneer Mother and Father statues will never stand again on UO campus, and the Jimmy John’s at the intersection of Washington and 7th is still boarded up. More importantly, however, is the way that the lives of so many were forever changed by that summer. That taste people got of freedom, of active joy, of incandescent refusal, will stick with them forever. Endnotes has noted that the GFR produced “revolutionaries without a revolution.” A disheartening state of affairs, for sure, but also an opening. Countless people have glimpsed what the overcoming of racial capitalist social relations and the creation of communal forms of life could look and feel like, and many will likely not settle for less.

Transmuting the experiences of 2020 into an inclination that pulls people towards the creation of a revolutionary force is a question of what some call “revolutionary becomings.” The foundations of their lives shaken by these events, people are undergoing a wholesale re-



Across the US, the murder of George Floyd called for a response that went far beyond anything reformers could provide, at least at the very onset. The outpouring of rage, here like everywhere else, was quickly seized upon by political actors looking to steer it in their own direction.

In the weeks following M29, the “Movement” in Eugene replaced the revolt, using its insurrectionary energies as a catalyst, while rewriting its own history everyday. Countless marches to nowhere were led by mainly two factions, one group of cop collaborators that eventually coalesced into the organization called Eugene Black Unity and the other being a left-wing militant formation called the BIPOC Liberation Collective. The latter seemed well-intentioned but unable, or unwilling, to seize the moment and lacked the experience to overcome this. The former barely disguised their intentions of keeping a lid on things. The dynamic that developed in Eugene paralleled the peaceful social movement daytime demonstrations/militant nighttime demonstrations dynamic seen in other cities, except that the latter never became consistently combative.

We could spend a great deal of time discussing Eugene Black Unity (EBU), but many cities saw similar formations: liberal Black leadership who led countless marches around downtown cores, collaborated with the police on their routes, and who were quick to turn on radicals and “agitators.” It’s fair to say that we did not attend many of their demos, and it would be disingenuous to pretend otherwise. The EPD adopted

a strategy of keeping a hands off approach for Eugene Black Unity's demos, while reserving viscious repression for everyone else. Their marches would often be escorted by the EPD, who justified this by saying they were preventing vehicular attacks (a common occurrence in Eugene that summer). This made it easier for EBU and their reformist message to spread and for them to attract demonstrators, since in theory one wouldn't need to be worried about being attacked by vigilantes at one of their rallies. The notable exception to this strategy happened in Springfield, a smaller town right on the border of Eugene. After the harassment of a Black resident, Eugene Black Unity led a series of marches through the Thurston neighborhood, the final one being brutally attacked by white vigilantes who collaborated with cops from the Springfield Police Department. Apparently, SPD didn't get the memo about Eugene Black Unity, and this difference in strategy by both police departments is something that warrants further investigation.¹

The other faction was the BIPOC Liberation Collective (BLC). The BIPOC Liberation Collective was born of a dramatic split that occurred at an afternoon rally organized by the mainstream activist Left (including some of the founders of Eugene Black Unity) in the week after the riot. The split occurred due to the more liberal activists' insistence on letting white people pushing patriotic, pacifistic bullshit speak on the mic. These speeches were interrupted by heckling from the crowd, as well as arguments from Black and Brown radicals present. After a short breakaway march, a group discussion ensued, and the new group emerged publicly in the days after. The following is a rough timeline of events that summer.

June 7th

BLC held their first event on June 7th, a little over a week after the uprising. It began with a large rally (500+) in front of the Lane County Courthouse which included speeches. BLC then led a march that cut through downtown, towards the University of Oregon. The chants and aesthetics of the march were militant, but a noticeable atmosphere of hesitation hung over the crowd. Whereas the May 29th riot in Eugene had the energy of an angry mob bent on vengeance, the



So, where did all that energy go? Have there been any changes since Summer 2020? Surely, we would argue that anarchists are not as marginal and isolated from one another as they were before. Consistent efforts at networking have helped to create a more cohesive movement of our own. Things like the successful anti-fascist action at the Planned Parenthood in September 2021 showed a stronger capacity to act together than had existed at the beginning of the Uprising (and shifted control of the streets back to partisans!). Additionally, it is now rare for a demo in Eugene to happen without property destruction, a scarce occurrence before the rebellion.

But what of the demands and lip service? Excuse us if we're not shocked that a Joe Biden presidency has put even more resources in the hands of the police, and excuse us if we don't care that your favorite movement politician's pet policies didn't get passed. The elements of the movement that acted for social reform, for policy adjustments, whose struggle consisted of raising visibility for demands made of those in power: these contained all the essential elements of counter-insurgency, regardless of whether or not participants in these actions intended on it.⁴ Black Liberation was quickly thrown aside in favor of a spectacle wherein more Black faces in politics and some extra cash going to Black business owners was going to just have to be *good enough* compensation for everything. That is to say, symbols and crumbs are handed over in exchange for the eternal continuance of this genocidal, anti-Black world.⁵

There are other ways of strategically garnering visibility for our perspectives: banner drops, graffiti in high-traffic locations, and projecting movies or images in public places are just a few tried and true creative outlets anarchists have used over the years. Visibility itself can be problematic (we don't disagree with Foucault's Admiral Ackbarian assertion that it is "a trap"), but anarchist engagements with publicity might best be viewed as a means to obliquely communicate with each other and those who we might find affinity with, not to communicate with those in power nor to get more passive adherents to our ideology like a politician grooming voters.

Wendy Trevino's *Revolutionary Letter* sums up this approach to playing the games of visibility and publicity nicely:

"find the people who will help / be loud
& clear so they know where you are — focus on them, be encouraged
by them, encourage them, work with them, don't worry
about the people who won't help. they will be of no help even
if they are on your side."

atmosphere at this demo felt heavy, and this effected the confidence of the demonstrators. Although there was no police presence, minimal property damage occurred on the route. The march arrived at the University of Oregon, where tables had been set up, and speakers prepared to address the crowd. The content of the speeches was much more agreeable than the week before, with speakers on topics such as the abolition of the police and the justification of property destruction. Towards the end, a speech on "how to deescalate" was confronted by a protester. After this, the rally ended, and the group marched across the river towards the police headquarters where a children's mural of support for the police was torn down and spray-painted. Pathetically, close examination of the "mural" showed the same handwriting over and over again, indicating just a few children had made the entire thing. Talk about having real supporters!

After a few speeches at this location, the crowd headed back into town. Once more, a tense energy pervaded, dampening the possibility of the march escalating further. This was compounded by the paranoia of the organizers yelling at people to "tighten up" when there was no visible police presence at all. The march dispersed shortly after.

June 13th

More energizing was the event BLC held to take down the Pioneer Mother and Father statues at the University. Both of them were blatant monuments to Oregon's bloody colonial history, and for the better part of a decade, attempts to negotiate with the University's institutions to remove them had failed. This event tapped into the broad wave of iconoclasm against colonial and white supremacist statues that had reached a crest nationwide. Promoted as a "teach-in," the event started with some speeches explaining the history of colonization of Oregon, and Lane County in particular (which is Kalapuya land).² Fairly quickly, however, the organizers led the crowd to the statues and wasted no time in affixing ropes to them and encouraging attendees to pull them down as a group. The University decided not to put the statues back up after this.

July 25th

The last highlight of the summer worth mentioning is the July 25th Day of Solidarity with Portland, a series of regional and national protests in response to the federal occupation of Portland, OR. The event was called for via an anonymous flyer, and it quickly picked up traction through anarchist networks, liberal formations such as the Wall of Moms – Eugene, and everyday people who were upset about what was happening just north of us. The result was another large gathering in front of the Federal Courthouse. No doubt inspired by the brave fighters of Portland, many of the attendees came ready for confrontation, with a mixture of black bloc and frontliners present. This proved useful almost immediately as a large group of far-Right “patriots” came with their own shields and poles and attempted to attack the gathering as soon as it began. Initially, the Wall of Moms took position directly in front of them but were too few to prevent skirmishes between protesters and fascists, which resulted in a firearm being discharged on the right-wing side. This had the effect of both scaring off many attendees on both sides and agitating everyone who stayed. Skirmishes escalated until the fascists were literally stripped of their large wooden shields and forced to retreat.

Winning a fight such as this ballooned the confidence of the crowd, and after holding the space for another hour, around 150 people departed the courthouse, smashing targets across downtown before reaching the jail where members of Eugene Black Unity attempted to impose order. Fortunately, they were left yelling into a megaphone by themselves as the crowd ignored them to make a loop back towards the courthouse, breaking windows at the Whole Foods and at Elk Horn Brewery, who notoriously allowed Proud Boys to meet in their parking lot before attacking demonstrators.

Not to be lost in this story, and keeping tabs on the situation with drones overhead, the Eugene police waited to make their move, finally swarming in with vehicles, and bikes, and deploying teargas. This was responded to with rocks, bottles, and dumpster fires, and a riot was declared. A game of cat-and-mouse developed, and the next hour saw clashes spread into neighborhoods throughout the inner core of

platforms. On an ideological level, it is those narratives that confirm people’s preconceived biases and prejudices that generally spread most widely. The purpose of capitalist media apparatuses is to generate consent for governance among citizens or at least enough confusion and stimulation to ensure passivity. To be clear, we are not trying to beat capitalist media at their own game; however, there are some things only anarchists can say, and those things tend to resonate in the midst of a revolt. Our goal as anarchists intervening in the sphere of publicity is to work upon desire, to raise tensions and encourage people to take action in their own lives. This can be difficult because successfully achieving this means working against the grain of all contemporary forms of media. Friendly media outlets like *DoubleSided Media* can play a positive role in some contexts, but ultimately, the very figure of the *Journalist* is problematic: we must assert our own perspectives instead of relying on specialists to speak for us. The whole of journalism in this society works to hollow out the substance of revolt, repackaging it as a series of images to be consumed. Even radical-friendly media outlets help to reproduce an alienated way of relating to life, wherein we are reduced to passive spectators in our own lives. Not to mention that disseminating non-anonymized video footage of a rowdy demonstration is a great way to get comrades arrested.

There is a longstanding practice of anarchists releasing public communiqués on actions taken, analyses about recent events, and report-backs on demonstrations, and for good reason. It gives us the opportunity to contribute our own meanings to the proceedings, signal our involvement and presence to fellow travelers who might not be as incorporated into our networks, and build habits of debate and critical thought within the milieu. There were a few attempts at this during the summer of 2020, but none proved very influential.³ This essay is an offering towards exactly this practice. Lane County lacks a dedicated counter-info website (Portland has *Rose City Counter-Info* and the Seattle-Olympia area has *Puget Sound Anarchists*), but reports of this type can be submitted to *It’s Going Down* and other websites. Additionally, building up platforms on social media and being quick to the draw with analyses, memes, and other forms of expression can have a big impact. In this online arena, humor and absurdity are our friends — *get silly with it!*



Within every conflict, the terrain and terms, the sides and the stakes of the antagonism are themselves also under constant contestation. This can be imperfectly named the struggle over *narrative* — the struggle to determine what meanings and understandings of the conflict prevail, the set of battles and interventions in both speech and in deed that determine what war is being fought in the first place. What immediately occurred after M29 was that the proponents of insurrection lost the narrative war. The revolt was subsumed under the terms and stakes laid out by the liberal movement for democratic and cultural assimilation. This subsumption was helped along by many so-called “radicals” who added that “it was just white anarchists acting out of line; they didn’t follow Black leadership.” Most anarchists who didn’t wholesale accept this framing of events were too hesitant, or isolated, to make a real dent in the discourse, or carve out their own space. We have to admit we were defeated in this arena. For the most part, we were left scrambling to react against the narrative already laid out for us by the liberals, activists, reactionaries, and their media apparatuses, rather than asserting our own. Better than engaging on their terms to defend the actions of the rioters, we should have been more clear in affirming that the vandalism and looting were the acts with the closest possible fidelity to the spirit of the Minneapolis uprising, short of burning down our own police station.

Now, we do have to acknowledge that in terms of narrative control, the deck is stacked against us partisans. On a material level, it is overwhelmingly the party of order who have access to the means of propagation through wide-reaching media infrastructure and

Eugene, involving both protesters and residents. In the mayhem, the Eugene police deployed teargas which wafted into homes, and became a scandal. They were also implicated on video standing by as a fascist assaulted a teenage demonstrator in the mayhem. Following this, the city leaned into damage control mode and vowed they would not allow downtown to become the playground of rioters again. It was the last major victory of the summer.

The August 5th crackdown & September 4th rally

Unfortunately, two events happened in succession that significantly stifled the energy locally. The first was a wave of repression from the Eugene Police, which as of this time is still ongoing. In the span of a few hours on the morning of August 5th, 11 people were arrested on charges stemming from the May 29th riot. This sent a shock-wave through town as many feared they could be next, and some people decided to lay low after that. The second was a botched rally to support arrestees that was scheduled by some well-established anarchist activists for the evening of September 4th. The rally was again set to start at the Federal Courthouse; however, it was called off by the organizers a couple hours ahead of time due to rumors that the Proud Boys were coming to clash with demonstrators. A small crowd of around 25 still showed up, either out of defiance or ignorance, to the cancelled march and were engaged by an equally sized group of Proud Boys who took advantage of the small numbers to harass and intimidate. The protesters were only let out of their predicament when ample backup showed up to assist them. This was an extremely embarrassing scene for the organizers of the event and demoralizing for Eugene as a whole. Frustratingly, it inaugurated an era where control of the streets shifted over to the far right for the next year, after they came to the understanding that Eugene was not ready to match their level of force. The protests of the summer ended on this note.

For the most part the BLC lacked the experience and confidence to take things in an insurrectionary direction, instead mainly content to be a more militant counterpart to Eugene Black Unity. For example, they

led more militant chants, were okay with spray paint, and wouldn't be weird to you for coming in black bloc attire. Despite this, the feeling of their rallies was often very heavy and dampened the confidence of the crowd. In saying this, it is not our intention to denigrate the leadership abilities of BLC as much as commenting on the inherent limitations of that model of mobilization and struggle. When an individual or group is put into a leadership position, it limits the agency of both leader and led. The leaders are left with the weight of logistical and strategic responsibility, unable to improvise and act in more creative ways in the streets. Meanwhile, followers are expected to abdicate all of their strategic insight, and instead be pawns for whatever the leadership wants to do. Both parties become frozen in their specialized roles rather than being able to fully participate in the events. This causes a parody-like situation where a dedicated group attempts to recreate the aesthetic of a revolt through the use of the same rhetoric and visuals (such as masks) but contains none of the collective confidence that makes a revolt possible. It is a reminder that insurrection has no party.

This is not meant as a wholesale rejection of all forms of leadership and roles. Especially when it comes to demonstrations, there will generally be a core group who is calling the action and is committed to seeing it through, has plans for how it will go, is bringing gear to make that a reality, etc. Even in the most otherwise "leaderless" of contexts. But it is important that this not stay a fixed role, that those in that position do everything they can to share their skills and connections, to make it known they aren't the only ones "allowed" to call actions. An additional qualification to the critique of leadership is that it is not necessarily the case that, in the absence of leadership, everything magically works out. While there are some seasoned comrades in Lane County, the majority of anarchists here lacked the extensive experience in combative street action possessed by many in, say, Portland or Seattle. If the leadership/led dynamic emerged in the summer of 2020, it was not exclusively due to the self-deputization of the leaders but also because many were looking for someone to tell them how to act in the streets. To overcome this, we need not only to remove the leaders, but to build and spread the various skills, abilities, and connections

that allow people to show up powerfully to events and make them theirs. Not so much a lack of leadership as *the proliferation of leadership ability to as many as possible*.

On the part of anarchists, this will require intervention, experimentation in acting together, and an eye to encouraging newcomers and learning from each other. This is one place where it is important that those of us in mostly-white networks and organizations do our best to reach out to Black, Indigenous, and other comrades of color. It is not just financial wealth white people in Lane County have disproportionate access to, but also a wealth of connections and other resources (such as increased access to free time financial wealth secures). Part of working to further Black liberation in Lane County means doing our best to share these connections, resources, and capacity to make shit happen.